

**Board of County Commissioners
Leon County, Florida**


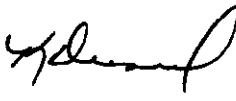
**Workshop Demonstration
of Mainline's "Better Place"
an Online Citizen Service Request
Management Tracking System**

**2:30 pm - 3:30 pm
Tuesday, February 11, 2003**

**Leon County Courthouse
Commission Chambers
5th Floor**

Board of County Commissioners Workshop Item

Date of Meeting: February 11, 2003
Date Submitted: February 6, 2003

To: Honorable Chairman and Members of the Board
From: Parwez Alam, County Administrator 
Kim Dressel, Management Services Group Director 
Subject: Demonstration of Mainline's "Better Place" Online Citizen Service
Request Management Tracking System

Statement of Issue:

This workshop provides the Board a demonstration of Mainline's "Better Place" Online Citizen Request Management Tracking System and Leon County's web-based "On-line Reporting" and "Constituent Tracking" systems.

Background:

During the Board's November 26, 2002 MIS Technology Workshop, staff was directed to schedule a demonstration of "Better Place." Commissioner Grippa had expressed a need for the Commissioners' aides to have a constituent tracking system. The aides currently track constituent calls with separate, manual or semi-automated methods, and he conveyed is looking for a process that provides comprehensive tracking and accountability as well as reporting of constituent calls.

Analysis:

Mainline's "Better Place" is a web-based solution that is provided to jurisdictions as a monthly fee-based service over the Internet, and is available on Florida's State Contract. The database resides at Mainline and is technically managed by Mainline's staff. The proposed fee for Leon County is \$375 per month. Any customization of the product is provided for a cost as additional services. Several small to medium sized Florida jurisdictions successfully use the Better Place service, including Apopka, Avon Park, Cape Canaveral, Delray Beach, Escambia County, Ft. Myers Beach, Jacksonville Beach, Mount Dora, Ocala, Osceola County, Sarasota, St. Cloud, St. Petersburg, and Titusville.

MIS has viewed "Better Place" in several venues, most recently at the Florida Local Government Information Systems Association whose members are the MIS and IT Directors of Florida's cities and counties. Mainline and representatives from the Florida League of Cities will demonstrate "Better Place" during the workshop.

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"Better Place" is similar to Leon County's "On-line Reporting" web service. Leon County staff identified a need for constituents to be able to place calls for assistance via the web, and for those calls to be automatically routed to the responsible party(ies), when a multi-disciplinary team redesigned the County's website. This identified need led to "On-line Reporting" that was developed in cooperation with the City of Indianapolis' IT Department during the E-Government workshop in December 2000. Leon County's redesigned website, including "On-line Reporting," was deployed in January, 2001.

"On-line Reporting," housed on the County's web server, allows a constituent or staff to make a request over the web. The system then automatically e-mails the request to the proper division(s) for prompt response. The constituent can indicate, on the web-based form, if they wish to be contacted for feedback. A database is maintained that can be queried and sorted and printed.

On January 27, 2003, Lillian Bennett, Erin VanSickle, and Kate Brady reviewed "On-line Reporting" with MIS to determine if it could meet their needs. They advised they were looking for some enhancements that would allow the aides to track additional details on constituent calls they had received and logged, specific to their Commissioner's district. In response, MIS enhanced "On-line Reporting" and developed "Constituent Call Tracking System" (CATS) which allows the aides to input constituent's requests over the Intranet (an internal network that is not open to the public). Some of the features of CATS (subject to modification based upon the customers' input) are:

- ▶ Each call has a unique identifier for future reference.
- ▶ Calls are categorized as "inquiry," "complaint," or "comment."
- ▶ A drop down pick list of subdivision names so that aides do not have to type the entire name.
- ▶ The aides are able to add new problem types for the drop down problem pick list.
- ▶ Ongoing updates for a specific call so that a running "history" of the call is stored.
- ▶ Notification of each call can go to each Commissioner and/or appropriate staff and/or simply stored into the database.
- ▶ Reports can be generated and sorted in a variety of ways—by call type, district, date, problem area, subdivision, citizen name, and/or status.

"Better Place" is a viable solution for jurisdictions that do not maintain their own internet services and/or web development staff and has enjoyed success in many jurisdictions, as previously mentioned.

However, "Constituent Tracking" does not incur any a monthly fee, it can be customized at no additional cost as new features or enhancements are defined by the users (including the potential to interface with existing County systems such as GIS) and it can technically be opened and used by other divisions. In addition to the continued use of "On-line Reporting" for calls placed directly over the web, typically by constituents, staff recommends that CATS be used for calls taken by the aides, which allows them to track the additional data they are seeking. Both processes provide e-mail

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referral to the appropriate parties, and a database is maintained for each system.

Staff contacted Isaac Mitchell at Mainline, who noted that the "On-line Reporting" program is similar to Mainline's "Better Place" product. A copy of this workshop item was forwarded to Mainline for their review, but as of February 6, 2003, they have not provided any feedback.

Options:

1. Direct staff to use CATS, the in-house solution, for constituent call tracking for the aides.
2. Direct staff to contract with Mainline for "Better Place" as the solution for constituent call tracking for the aides.
3. Board direction.

Recommendation:

Option 1.

PA/KD/pc

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